

The following is claimed:

1. A network architecture for a video communications system, comprising:
a server for receiving login data for a VC session from a plurality of participants;
a controller configured to control the VC session based on the login data; and
a reflector for passing an audio/visual signal from at least one of the VC session participants to all of the other participants based on a control signal from the controller.
2. The network architecture of claim 1, wherein the reflector is co-located with at least one of the VC session participants.
3. The network architecture of claim 1, further comprising a video communications client program operating on a participant's client machine, where the client program includes an audio/visual viewer configured to display the audio/visual signal received from the reflector.
4. The network architecture of claim 3, wherein the audio/visual viewer comprises a codec for compressing and decompressing video images and sound.
5. The network architecture of claim 3, wherein the reflector can direct a peer-to-peer connection between the audio/visual viewers of the participants.
6. A method for distributing a video communications session over a network to a plurality of participants, comprising the steps of:
receiving a request for the video communications session;

assigning a controller for the video communications session request;
connecting one or more of the plurality of participants to a reflector;
distributing at least one audio/visual signal to each reflector; and
sending the audio/visual signal from each reflector to each participant connected to the reflector.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the distributing step further comprises compressing the audio/visual signal.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising the steps of:
receiving the audio/visual signal at a client machine for each participant;
decompressing the audio/video signal at the client machine; and
displaying the audio/video signal at the client machine.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the compressing step occurs at a client machine.

10. A method for distributing an audio/visual processor to a client machine of a VC session participant over a network, comprising the steps of:

receiving a login request;
determining the VC session in which the participant will participate based on the login request;
evaluating the performance of audio/visual processors over the network implementing the VC session; and

downloading the audio/visual processor to each participant of the VC session based on the audio/visual processor evaluation.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the audio/visual processor comprises a codec for compressing and decompressing video images and sound.

12. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of:
removing the audio/visual processor from the client machine after the VC session is complete.

13. A method for delivering a ticket to a participant participating in an online event, comprising the steps of:
setting a time and date for the online event;
retrieving a list of participants in the online event from a first user;
assigning a controller to host the event;
generating a digital ticket for each of the participants on the list such that the ticket includes a reference to the time, date, and controller; and
distributing the digital ticket to each participant.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the distributing step comprises sending an email to each participant.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the ticket comprises a URL having an individual code for each participant.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the URL passes a set of codes to a CGI script.

17. An audio/visual viewer, comprising:

a network interface configured to receive audio/visual signals from a plurality of participants;

a codec for compressing and decompressing audio/visual signals;

a mixer for mixing the audio signals transmitted from a plurality of participants; and

a video display for displaying the video signals transmitted from a plurality of participants such that the video display simultaneously displays each visual signal from each participant of the plurality of participants.

18. The audio/visual viewer of claim 17, further comprising a time stamp configured to stamp a time to each participant's audio and video signals.